

*United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

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Role of the U.S. Military in Countering China's Growing Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Major Bruce D. Gordon

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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Eric Y. Shibuya

Approved: 

Date: FEB 13, 2009

Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Paul D. Gelpi

Approved: 

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Executive Summary

Title: Role of the U.S. Military in Countering China's Growing Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa

Author: Major Bruce D. Gordon, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The United States military is the least effective component in countering the growing influence of China in Sub-Saharan Africa and should be a supporting effort to enhance the more important applications of economic, diplomatic and informational power.

Discussion: While U.S. foreign policy has focused on the Global War on Terror, China has embarked on a mission to extend its influence in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to secure access to natural resources. Current U.S. economic ties with the region surpass those of China but the gap is rapidly shrinking. Left unabated it will swing in favor of China in the coming years. China employs a soft approach to achieve its interests that focuses on economic and diplomatic efforts which are supported by informational and military activities. It is successful in Africa and its influence is growing not because of its military presence, but rather its coordinated application of all the elements of national power. Historic U.S. interests have not been focused on the African continent and in light of increased importance placed in the region, U.S. Africa Command was formed. Though it might be an efficient response, it is not the most appropriate. The U.S. must refocus its efforts on developing African partnerships in order to further establish itself as a valued international partner. Africa Command is ill-suited to achieve this and a more diplomatic approach is required.

Conclusion: The most effective way to counter China in Sub-Saharan Africa is not to target it directly, but rather take an indirect approach by focusing on African nations instead. The U.S. must remove the perceived military appearance of its Africa policy and create a new, civilian led organization that employs a cohesive strategy in the application of all the elements of national power. Economic activities must be the cornerstone of this approach and be reinforced by diplomatic action. Military endeavors must be the least visible component and should be reduced to a supporting role. This will require reprioritization of efforts but in the end, the U.S. will achieve both its national security objectives and mitigate the growing Chinese influence.

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Over the last decade, while U.S. foreign policy has focused on conducting the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the self-proclaimed “largest developing country” of China has embarked on a mission to extend its influence.¹ Nowhere is this more apparent than in Sub-Saharan Africa where China’s involvement has rapidly expanded. Though U.S. economic ties with the region surpass those of China, the gap is rapidly shrinking. If left unabated, it will swing in favor of China in the coming years. The establishment of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was a good first step to refocus U.S. attention in the region but a more concerted effort to cohesively apply all the elements of national power is required. Ultimately, the United States military is the least effective component of this pursuit and should be a supporting effort to enhance the more important applications of economic, diplomatic and informational power in order to counter the growing influence of China in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This essay will first define Sub-Saharan Africa and outline China’s strategic interests in the region. Next, it will detail China’s Africa policy implementation methods and demonstrate its effects through a case study highlighting the resultant competition between the U.S. and China. Following this, the essay will evaluate China’s Africa policy and list the strategic implications of China’s expanding role on the continent and its impact on U.S. interests. Finally, it will present current U.S. measures to engage Sub-Saharan Africa, assess their effectiveness in countering China’s influence, and recommend an alternative course of action to safeguard U.S. interests.

Sub-Saharan Africa Defined

Sub-Saharan Africa consists of the 48 countries south of the Sahara Desert (See Figure 1 in the Appendix). Culturally, there are thousands of distinct groups and diseases such as HIV/AIDS run rampant. In Southern Africa alone, 10 different countries have HIV infection rates above 10%. Economically, Sub-Saharan Africa is overwhelmed by poverty and according

to a 2007 World Bank report; it hosts 9 of the 10 poorest countries in the world and 41% of the population lives on one dollar a day or less.²

Since 1973, Sub-Saharan Africa growth is far behind other developing countries. It experienced an average annual increase of 0.9% in per capita income, which was 1.5% below other developing countries and nearly 2% below developed countries. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen improvement in the last decade and experienced 4% annual growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the period 2000-2005 and a 5.6% increase in 2006, but because of rapid population growth during the 1990s, GDP per capita has remained stable or decreased in most countries. Rampant disease problems, debt burden, poor governance, political instability, and lack of internal infrastructure have significantly detracted from economic growth.³ Further, its total exports as a percentage of global trade have decreased steadily from roughly 7% in 1948 to just over 1% in 2004.⁴ The net effect of these poor conditions is an environment where foreign investment has a significant impact and enables developers to quickly gain a strong foothold.

Militarily, Sub-Saharan Africa has long been rife with conflict. Though the number of armed clashes has generally decreased since the 1960s, political violence, inter-communal strife, and fighting amongst armed groups to include governmental forces, is prevalent throughout the region today (Figure 2). The African Union (AU) is currently in the process of building an African Standby Force (ASF) of 15,000 troops, divided into 5 regional standby brigades to address these security issues. This undertaking faces significant funding and structural problems though and according to the German Development Institute, one must assume that Sub-Saharan Africa possesses a very weak military capability at the regional and continental levels.⁵

Chinese Strategic Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa

Any discussion of Chinese strategic objectives must include, perhaps should start with, a discussion of its energy needs. Its current strategic interests in Sub-Saharan Africa developed as a by-product of its quest to achieve energy security. Energy security entered Chinese political discourse when it realized in 1993 that it was no longer self-sufficient in meeting its energy needs.⁶ By 1997, the Chinese government adopted an all-out strategy of “going abroad” to meet domestic requirements.⁷ Today, Chinese policy seeks to maintain adequate and affordable oil supplies delivered safely to the homeland, in order to protect the leadership’s core objectives: continued economic growth, prevention of Taiwanese independence, continued emergence as a global power, and survival of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).⁸

Historically, China maintained primarily an ideological interest in Africa and promoted revolutionary movements similar to its own. As the Sino-Soviet split deepened in the late 1960s and 1970s, China adopted a more pragmatic, self-preservation mindset and generated a security strategy intent on preoccupying Soviet forces overseas. It provided financing, arms, and training to African groups opposing the Soviets in order to keep the Soviet troops dispersed.⁹

During the late 1970s and 1980s, Africa drew reduced attention by the Chinese. Mao’s death in 1976 caused significant changes in the political landscape. In the decade that followed, China experienced rural poverty, economic stagnation, and public disenchantment. This caused its leadership to focus on the West in order to reinvigorate the failing economy. This dynamic along with a reduced Soviet threat and decreased Maoist ideological fervor diverted attention from Africa. Renewed attention and emphasis on the region did not reappear until China’s economic rise in the 1990s led to a greater need for natural resources.¹⁰

The need to develop external sources of oil culminated during the period 2000-2005 when China experienced massive demand growth (Figure 3). Though it only accounted for 8% of

global consumption during this period, it was responsible for 27% of global consumption growth and was accompanied by a 50% increase in net oil imports.¹¹ Perceived Middle East instability owing to the U.S. GWOT encouraged China to further diversify its energy import partnerships.¹²

The underdeveloped and resource-rich lands of Sub-Saharan Africa were an attractive option for expansion. In 2004, China surpassed Japan as the number two importer of African oil behind the U.S.¹³ By 2005, China had 27 major oil and natural gas projects in 14 African countries and Chinese oil imports from Africa were increasing at the annual rate of 30%.¹⁴ Finally, by 2020 China's oil demand is projected to surpass the U.S.¹⁵ In comparison, U.S. crude imports as a percentage of total consumption will go from 58% to a projected 62% from 2000 to 2020.¹⁶ For the same period, China will increase from 33% to an estimated 60-80%.¹⁷ To meet this requirement, China must continue to expand while the U.S. need only maintain the status quo.

Today, China's closest African ties are with Sudan. Overall, 35% of African exports to China come from Sudan.¹⁸ Sudan also accounts for 6% of total Chinese oil imports, which equates to roughly 50% of Sudanese oil exports.¹⁹ In 2004, Chinese foreign domestic investment (FDI) in Sudan was three times more than the next highest recipient of Nigeria. Additionally, as of 2006 China had 24,000 workers in the country. The two nations have established a symbiotic relationship and on a positive note, the leading Chinese National Oil Company (NOC), the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), ensures nearly 50% of its revenues are directed to the Sudanese government. CNPC also employs Sudanese workers which helps ease employment pressure in the area.²⁰ Militarily, China is Sudan's largest arms supplier.²¹

Aside from oil, China is involved in many other activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. As of 2006, it had over 800 non-energy related enterprises supported in part by over 800,000 Chinese living in Africa in the industries of textiles, power generation, construction, tourism, and

communication.²² Its overall trade with Africa increased from 2000-2007 at the rate of roughly 40% a year (Figure 4 and 5) and now ranks second behind the U.S. China's economic investment is also rising and it plans to spend US\$20 billion from 2008-2011, which is commensurate with World Bank projected expenditures for the same period.²³ Finally, China has cancelled some or all debt of 31 African countries. Taken together, these efforts reinforce China's image as a valuable African partner and a "desirable long-term customer" for oil.²⁴ This is captured best by Ethiopia's Prime Minister who said, "China's exemplary endeavor to ease African countries' debt problem is indeed a true expression of solidarity and commitment."²⁵

Chinese Africa Policy Implementation

China's foreign policy is predicated on non-intervention. Simply stated, it will maintain relations with a country without requiring internal change to address domestic issues, as long as its own interests are preserved. Where Western nations will call for questionable regimes to address internal adversity as a prerequisite to receiving aid, China will not. Premier Wen Jiabao clearly articulated this position during his 2003 Forum on Chinese-African Cooperation (FOCAC) speech when he stated, "We do offer our assistance with the deepest sincerity and without any political conditions."²⁶

In Sub-Saharan Africa, China employs a "soft" approach. Its policy emphasizes a cohesive application of all the elements of national power and focuses on economic and diplomatic efforts supported by informational and military activities. It exhibits flexibility and adaptation and has mastered the art of indirect influence.²⁷ This soft approach consists of the following: diplomatic dialog, economic development, agricultural and technical assistance, and military engagement.

To deepen diplomatic relations with Sub-Saharan Africa, China established the FOCAC in 2000, which enabled China to "institutionalize its diplomatic overtures, technical training, debt

relief, loans, grants, and infrastructure projects.”²⁸ During the November 2006 FOCAC summit in Beijing that was attended by leaders from 48 of the 53 African countries,²⁹ the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, clearly articulated his policy goals and outlined five specific objectives:

1. Deepen political relations of equality and mutual trust through high-level political dialog and achieve progress through unity.
2. Broaden win-win economic cooperations through enhanced economic ties and increased business associations.
3. Expand cultural enrichment by increasing mutual people exchanges in various fields to promote understanding and friendship, emphasizing the younger generation.
4. Promote balanced and harmonious global development through cooperation in order to guide economic globalization towards prosperity for all.
5. Strengthen cooperation and mutual support in international affairs and enhance security by coordinating to jointly respond to global security threats.³⁰

China’s diplomatic efforts are reinforced by its leadership’s actions. Collectively, they believe they are the largest of the developing countries of the world and are ideal mentors for the struggling nations of Africa. As such, they engage their African counterparts on multiple fronts. Aside from the multitude of humanitarian, cultural, and educational projects that further China’s image and influence in the region, they have many high-level interactions with African leaders.³¹ The Chinese President frequents Africa as do the Foreign Minister and Premier. Between the three of them, they visited eleven countries on the continent in 2006 and culminated in the landmark FOCAC Summit in November.³² In comparison, the U.S. President and Secretary of State visited only two in 2006.³³ According to the African writer Adama Gaye, “No country among China’s Western competitors has done as much as China to engage Africa politically.”³⁴

Economically, China has long supported Sub-Saharan Africa and Hu Jintao pledged new support during the 2006 FOCAC summit. The most significant promises were to double assistance to Africa by 2009, provide US\$5 billion in new loans over 3 years, establish a China-

Africa development fund of US\$5 billion to encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa, and cancel significant debt. He also promised to establish 3 to 5 economic zones, reduce tariffs, train 15,000 professionals, and build multiple schools, hospitals and technology centers.³⁵

China also conducts economic activities specifically targeted at increasing NOC profitability. It provides financial incentives to entice nations to offer investment opportunities to the NOCs. It also builds or offers cheap loans to Africa to finance infrastructure and create health programs with the aim of gaining Chinese business opportunities. The government also provides inexpensive loans to the NOCs to encourage their investment. This subsidy allows the oil companies to enter into transactions that may not be profitable in order to gain access to new areas. This adds to China's ability to enter into agreements in certain regions of Sub-Saharan Africa where Westerners will not.³⁶ The net effect of these incentives is to persuade Africans to support new Chinese projects and sets conditions that encourage Chinese companies to expand.

China also provides agricultural and technical assistance. It exported huge amounts of technology to Africa in recent years in areas such as engineering, mechanics, agriculture and telecommunications. Over 10,000 Chinese experts have established nearly 200 projects in the agricultural field. These are comparatively inexpensive but effectively "Promote Beijing's economic development model... and improve China's image."³⁷

Militarily, it is difficult to discern the degree of support China provides because the information is not published openly. It was second only to Russia in its arms exports to Africa between 1996 and 2003.³⁸ China is the leading military supplier to Zimbabwe and the equipment and training it provided has been used against domestic opposition to the Mugabe regime.³⁹ Roger Kaplan contends that aside from the volume of military hardware sold to Sudan, China has four to ten thousand soldiers disguised as petroleum engineers and construction workers in the

country.⁴⁰ Peter Pham, a fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, reports that China has also sold US\$1 billion of arms to fuel the Ethiopia/Eritrea conflict.⁴¹ The Brookings Institute believes that the arms sales may simply be extra incentives to do business with China.⁴² To its credit, China began sending forces to participate in African UN missions in 2001 and is now the largest troop provider among the permanent members of the Security Council.⁴³

Sudan Case Study

The following case study outlines Chinese activities in Sudan. It also identifies the competition between China and the U.S. resulting from their different African approaches. Finally, it will highlight the negative consequences of China's influence in the region.

In 1993, Sudan was declared a state sponsor of terrorism and in 1997, sanctions ordered by President Clinton forced out Chevron, General Motors, and other U.S. companies. This opened the door for Chinese oil companies to gain a foothold in the country and enabled the CNPC purchase of a 40% stake in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company; Sudan's largest oil firm and the primary driver in Sudan's fortunes.⁴⁴ China also owns 13 of the 15 largest foreign companies in Sudan, most of which are in the oil industry.⁴⁵ By 2006, Sudan's economy was growing at the annual rate of 9% accompanied by FDI near US\$5 billion and topped the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace "failed states" list.⁴⁶ Of this immense sum, China invested US\$1.4 billion on a pipeline and paid US\$2 billion for the Merowe dam, which is set to open this year and will more than double Sudan's power supply. As the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Energy and Mining for Sudan put it, "It was not our choice to look east... but when we looked west, all the doors were closed."⁴⁷

To further its economic benefit, China successfully watered down UN Security Council resolutions aimed at placing sanctions on Sudan in 2004 by threatening veto. Again in 2005 and

amidst international scrutiny for providing diplomatic support to Sudan, China signed a new trade deal and reaffirmed support for the reigning Khartoum regime.⁴⁸ As a senior fellow at the Century Foundation describes, "Beijing may make tactical moves to pressure Sudan, but it will not choose human rights over oil, a matter of paramount national interest."⁴⁹ This demonstrated that international pressure had little to no affect shaping Chinese policy in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁰

The circumstances in Sudan highlight China's willingness to work with Western classified "rogue states." This attitude enables them to gain access to and develop monopolies in areas the U.S. will not go.⁵¹ China's non-intervention policy sets conditions that allow its businesses to operate in environments such as Sudan without hindrance. In practice, it means internal turmoil and human rights atrocities will not prevent China from gaining an economic advantage.⁵²

More recently, China's Sudan approach reflects positive change and it appears it is now willing to use its influence to help sway the government to seek peaceful resolution of the Darfur conflict. A Chinese envoy finally convinced Sudan to accept UN peacekeepers after multiple refusals to the world community. It also voted in favor of a larger UN peacekeeping presence in 2006.⁵³ An interesting question accompanying this change of heart in China is why? Was it simply pressure from the international community or a change in moral outlook? Coincidentally, about the same time its stance on Sudan changed, it was finding it difficult to ensure the stability of its investments in Sudan's oil industry.⁵⁴ The most likely answer is some combination of economic interest and recognition of its obligation as a regional power to address and help correct significant conflicts. Regardless, the Sudan Case Study illustrates that China was willing to ignore internal affairs when filling a gap left by the U.S., in order to gain an advantage. It also demonstrates that when the level of violence rose to an unacceptable level, it veered from its

non-intervention policy and together with the UN, influenced a nation's domestic behavior to preserve its interests.

Evaluation of China's Sub-Saharan Africa Policy

Since renewing attention on Africa and subsequently expanding its strategic interests in the area, China has faced a number of issues that have the potential to undermine its efforts. These issues will be analyzed along the traditional lines of the elements of national power. Notably, China's greatest weaknesses in advancing its African interests lay in the economic realm followed closely by the informational.

Economically, China faces obstacles stemming from perceived unfair competition and trade imbalance. This is most apparent in Nigeria and South Africa's textile sectors where multiple mills have closed and tens of thousands of workers have lost their jobs as a result of inexpensive Chinese imports flooding the market.⁵⁵ This has led to public protests and a backlash against Chinese products and workers.⁵⁶ Also, high tariffs on non-resource oriented products exported to China make them less attractive and exacerbate the trade imbalance.⁵⁷ China is pursuing a free trade agreement with South Africa to address these conditions but growing concern over the influx of cheap Chinese consumer goods and unfair competition threatens to undermine their relationship. In an effort to alleviate this situation, the Chinese Premier visited South Africa personally and imposed restrictions on Chinese goods.⁵⁸

Aside from the competition between African and Chinese goods, the trade imbalance is a concern for African leaders. Overall African trade with China is balanced; however, if the oil exports are removed the picture is entirely different. Except for the resource-rich countries of Angola, Sudan, and Nigeria, Beijing's exports dominate. China has established multiple sales outlets in textile and electronics markets and these rapid developments have caused tensions. As

a result, countries such as Sudan are looking to renegotiate overgenerous contracts awarded to China in the 1990s and are looking to India and other international, non-Chinese companies for partnerships. Ultimately, China's exclusive benefit in certain regions is likely to diminish if the impacts of disparate economic benefits are not addressed.⁵⁹

Closely related to the economic consequences are the perceptions of China's influence both globally and by the African population. The South African president publicly stated that Africa could become a Chinese economic colony if the deepening trade imbalance is not fixed.⁶⁰ There is also a growing belief that Chinese economic influence is having a negative impact on the domestic labor market and local manufacturing.⁶¹ At the same time, some Western media have painted a bad picture of China in Africa and have called its investment, "new colonialism to plunder resources."⁶² These statements have damaged the Chinese image and brought about international pressure to reform its foreign policy.⁶³

Diplomatically, China is beginning to realize the costs associated with being a dominant regional entity. It now understands that the tag of "great power" does not come without associated responsibility and consequently it has been forced to adjust its foreign policy.⁶⁴ Additionally, it is now learning some of the same cultural lessons that the U.S. has through the GWOT. Chinese businessmen are accustomed to working with a strong central government. On the contrary, African governments are typically weak and the Chinese are relegated to working with Non-Governmental Agencies for which they are ill-prepared. They also lack language training and have little cultural knowledge and no understanding of the politics, which makes their pursuit of furthering Chinese interests at times impossible.⁶⁵ Collectively, these factors limit the potential of Chinese influence in the area.

Aside from diplomacy, China is realizing that regional security directly impacts economic success. Militants in the oil-rich Niger Delta who believed that China was stealing their natural resources publicly stated that Chinese workers were in the “line of fire” and eventually some were kidnapped by the rebel groups.⁶⁶ The poor Sudanese security situation has also jeopardized Chinese investments. As a result, China has been forced to take active measures to affect African internal affairs in order to preserve the stability of its oil investments.⁶⁷

Perceived exploitive financial dealings and the associated informational battle to preserve its image are the largest of the problems China has faced in Sub-Saharan Africa. Lack of security has also generated significant investment risk while diplomatically; China has learned that a non-intervention policy may not work. Taken as a whole, these issues carry the potential to significantly limit China’s ability to further its interests and have led to changes in foreign policy to adapt to its environment

U.S. in Sub-Saharan Africa

As outlined in the 1995 U.S. Department of Defense Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, the U.S. historically has held little strategic interest in the region.⁶⁸ This changed dramatically following the 1998 attacks on U.S. embassies and by 2002; the National Security Strategy (NSS) specifically addressed Africa.⁶⁹ Most recently, the 2006 NSS identified Africa as, “A high priority of this Administration,” and “recognizes that [U.S.] security depends upon partnering with Africans to strengthen fragile and failing states.”⁷⁰ Current U.S. policy in Sub-Saharan Africa aims to do the following: ensure security of oil and trade, promote maritime security, help build and train African militaries to reduce armed conflict, combat terror, and combat the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic.⁷¹

Future U.S. economic success rests heavily in maintaining secure relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. The U.S. imported more oil from Sub-Saharan Africa than the Middle East in 2005 and this share is increasing.⁷² In 2006, 81% of U.S. imports from Sub-Saharan Africa were energy products. In comparison with China, the U.S. has more economic interaction with Africa measured in total volume but the value of U.S. imports has remained relatively stable while China's have nearly doubled and are predicted to pass the U.S. by 2010.⁷³ With U.S. dependence on international sources of energy so high, it is of paramount importance that it continues to build strong relationships with the region in order to guarantee its own domestic economic stability.

Militarily, President Bush asserted on multiple occasions that combating terror is a top national security priority.⁷⁴ The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace, characterized Africa by stating, "Challenges in Africa are myriad, including the specter of growing instability, genocide, civil war, and safe havens for terrorists."⁷⁵ Since global terrorism is an identified threat to U.S. security and Sub-Saharan Africa carries the potential to enable the expansion of terrorist networks, the U.S. must be concerned with conditions on the ground to ensure deepening of the world terrorist threat does not occur.

Strategic Implications of China in Sub-Saharan Africa

The U.S. must be most concerned with the willingness of China to wield its economic power to further its own interests, regardless of the consequences seen in Sub-Saharan African internal affairs. China has used its economic power to block reforms constructed by western governments to curb corruption and poor government. Aid from the West is typically linked to proper governance and hinges upon settlement of human rights issues. In direct opposition, China exercises a "no-strings-attached" aid policy, which undermines efforts by the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to solicit change.⁷⁶ It still expects some economic benefit such as guaranteed future oil sales, but does not require internal political change to be a prerequisite for aid. Such was the case in Angola in 2004 when the IMF offered financial aid on the condition that the central government rectifies significant internal problems. With the proposal lingering, China gave over US\$2 billion in loans to Angola enabling it to decline the IMF incentive and maintain the status quo.⁷⁷ In both the case of Sudan and Angola, China reaped exclusive economic benefits in spite of U.S. attempts to correct deficiencies in a weakened state. Accordingly, Chinese activities that intentionally or unintentionally undermine U.S. objectives in the region in pursuit of Chinese interests pose a potential significant threat to U.S. economic security.

Diplomatically, China leverages its African ties to further its position in other agencies within the UN such as the Human Rights Council. With the help of its African partner votes, some of which have their own questionable human rights records, China has avoided UN censure for its own human rights record. Aside from the Sudan case study, Chinese relations with Zimbabwe and its support for the controversial president, Robert Mugabe, is another example where the pursuit of national objectives overrode international attempts to help solve deplorable conditions.⁷⁸ In both the Sudan and Zimbabwe examples, China has proven that it will exploit its African influence to further its own political agenda despite international pressure.

From an informational power standpoint, world opinion seems to cast China in a better light than the U.S. In a 2008 Program on International Policy Attitudes poll of 34 countries from 6 continents including 3 from Sub-Saharan Africa, 47% of respondents viewed China as having a mainly positive influence in the world versus 35% for the U.S.⁷⁹ Nearly all of the nations polled were from democracies and all populated continents were equally represented. Additionally,

some African leaders believe China is easier to work with and more responsive to address economic needs than the West. The President of Senegal stated, "I have found that a contract that would take five years to discuss, negotiate, and sign with the World Bank takes three months when we have dealt with Chinese authorities," and also that, "The Chinese are more competitive, less bureaucratic and more adept at business in Africa than their critics."⁸⁰ With these trends and opinions in mind, who will the developing nations choose if given equivalent options from both the U.S. and China? Arguably, these are fragile opinions and if China were to adopt a policy where it attempted to influence the behavior of states more frequently, the trend might reverse or at a minimum, equalize. Regardless, it will be difficult for the U.S. to compete with China's image if the beliefs are widely held.

The most important question to address in any discussion of Chinese strategic implications is whether competition for energy resources will cause tension between the U.S. and China. The 2008 report to Congress on Chinese military power noted that China's access to energy supplies shapes China's defense policy and planning.⁸¹ It also cites from China's 2006 defense white paper which states, "Security issues related to energy... are mounting."⁸² Finally, it notes that the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) primary tasks are, "upholding national security and unity, and ensuring the interest of national development."⁸³ Does this imply that the PLA is willing to go to Africa to protect Chinese interests? Harsh Pant of the King's College Defence Studies Department argues the extreme case and asserts that both the U.S. and China will use military force in pursuit of energy security interests to guarantee supply and prices.⁸⁴ While a greater diplomatic presence is likely to mitigate this risk, the U.S. must still be prepared for the possibility that China increases its military posture to safeguard its interests on the continent.

As for the Sub-Saharan Africa terrorist threat, Robert Berschinski of the Strategic Studies Institute identifies the conditions fostering international terrorism. He contends that the present state of affairs in the region does not propagate terrorism because it is too poor and underdeveloped to support their networks. He goes on to describe the conditions that do foster terrorism and notes that if natural resource exploitation were to create economic inequality, affected areas would become prime locations for this threat to manifest.⁸⁵ With this in mind, if China's focus on oil-rich countries was to create economic disparity, the world may experience an increase in global terrorism emanating from the African continent. This has direct implications on the U.S. GWOT and consequently the U.S. must remain vigilant in assessing indications of developing hostile environments.

U.S. Response

Current U.S. Africa policy is implemented primarily by AFRICOM, which has the assigned mission:

U.S. AFRICOM, in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.⁸⁶

According to AFRICOM's Commander, it intends to assist Africans in providing their own security and stability to prevent the conditions that may lead to future conflicts through a whole of government approach.⁸⁷ To this end, it employs the principle of Active Security, which seeks to enable Africans to marginalize enemies while fostering the growth of just governments and legitimate institutions that support the development of civil societies.⁸⁸

In practice, AFRICOM participates in many activities to include humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, counter-narcotics, sanctions enforcement, demining, and maritime interception operations. It maintains two standing task forces to focus on specific African regions:

Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Program (TSCTP). These two bodies focus on military training of local forces and civil-military operations emphasizing development initiatives. Locally, both efforts have been successful if measured by domestic factors such as increased access to medical attention, improved irrigation and drinking water, and more schools.⁸⁹

Though AFRICOM was a step in the right direction to further U.S. interests in Sub-Saharan Africa, it placed a military face on what should be largely a diplomatic, economic, and informational endeavor. AFRICOM does have some support from African leaders but overall it has received a “generally chilly reception.”⁹⁰ Additionally, there are concerns that establishment of AFRICOM is a first step in advancing a U.S. military agenda to establish a larger footprint in Africa, especially if the headquarters were to move to the continent.⁹¹ Finally, some international academics argue that AFRICOM is simply a method to counter the rapidly growing Chinese influence on the continent.⁹² The fact that AFRICOM is perceived as a military organization despite its interagency structure undermines its credibility, induces resistance against it, and will impede its ability to advance U.S. objectives.

Militarily, the current CJTF-HOA and TSCTP approaches are framed like GWOT and are not likely to bring about enduring success. African leaders do not see Islamic extremism as a primary importance or threat because their overriding priority is to satisfy their people’s basic needs. Both forces have achieved short-term victories in military operations; however, these actions and the overall approach are in direct contradiction with the tenets and talking points of AFRICOM. Ultimately, there seems to be a disparity between U.S. rhetoric and actions on the ground. This ambiguity threatens to increase African resentment towards the U.S. and in the long run, may worsen U.S. relationships in the area.⁹³

The most effective way to counter China in Sub-Saharan Africa is not to target it directly, but rather take an indirect approach by focusing on African nations instead. China is effective in the region because it employs a soft-power approach, dominated by economic development and supported by diplomatic interaction. The U.S. must adopt a similar strategy in order to further relations on the continent, aid in its development, and deepen economic ties. By cementing the bond between the U.S. and Sub-Saharan Africa, it will make China comparatively less attractive when developing countries seek international support. The U.S. should not fear Chinese activities that work towards the betterment of Sub-Saharan Africa, but must limit the number of situations exclusively beneficial for China. Overall, the U.S. must maintain its status as the dominant international entity in the region in order to safeguard current and future interests.

To this end, AFRICOM may be an efficient response, but is not the most appropriate. Above all else, the U.S. must establish a stand-alone organization to coordinate the collective operations of all U.S. agencies in the cohesive application of all elements of national power. Similar to the FOCAC, this venue will support routine high-level interactions but will also provide a permanent medium of communication and facilitate interoperations between the U.S. and Sub-Saharan Africa states. In this architecture, AFRICOM will become a supporting arm overshadowed by economic, diplomatic, and informational efforts. The U.S. must eliminate the perceived "militarization of its foreign policy" in the region and replace it with a soft approach where U.S. rhetoric is reinforced by actions on the ground.⁹⁴

To start, the U.S. must address the fact that 24 of the 30 countries with the most costly business environments are in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁹⁵ Mutual economic prosperity is a major contributor to achieving U.S. interests and trade barriers are a detriment to prosperity. Along these lines, the U.S. must reduce tariffs on African exports to the U.S. This will make it more

attractive for Africa to trade with the U.S. than with China and will help develop greater volume and closer trade ties. The U.S. must also address conditions that deter FDI. Increased FDI will enable Africa to become more economically independent. Though increased U.S. investment will not necessarily replace Chinese investment, at a minimum, it facilitates further U.S. access to the region and in turn, will prevent China from dominating. This will entail resolving political instability, regional conflict, governmental corruption, and poor infrastructure.⁹⁶

In order to resource economic investment in the region, the U.S. will have to reprioritize its main effort. It should strive to transfer part of the Department of Defense (DOD) budget to the Department of State (DOS). This will facilitate manpower expansion and enable development of a cadre of foreign service Africa experts. With the increase in personnel, the DOS will be able to spearhead the parent agency and assume many of the roles the military now plays. At first glance this may seem to reduce U.S. defense capability; however, increasing capacity within the DOS will enable it to expand its role and conduct engagement activities to develop partnerships in Sub-Saharan Africa. The desired endstate remains the same but the method takes on a more diplomatic appearance and reduces the military presence.

Beyond budget realignment, the U.S. should offer incentives to its multinational corporations to invest in Sub-Saharan Africa. This will pay dividends in the form of increased U.S. revenues while further diversifying its involvement in the region and offering economic benefits to Africans. As these relationships develop, U.S. government oversight must prevent exploitive arrangements that counteract the positive effects of increased economic interdependence.

Diplomatically, the U.S. must pressure China to act responsibly through international agencies such as the UN. Chinese actions on the Security Council have undermined global efforts to improve Sub-Saharan Africa conditions and must be countered through international

pressure. Also, the U.S. should encourage China to join global agencies such as the International Energy Agency and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Its participation will help it to become partners with other members and contribute to a multi-national strategy towards oil extraction and revenue distribution vice the unilateral strategy it currently maintains. These measures will further integrate China into the world community and reduce its isolation.⁹⁷

Diplomatic measures will only be successful if the accompanying strategic communication is effective. U.S. applications of national power in the developing world must ensure that the U.S. remains a respected and important player in global politics. This is especially important in Sub-Saharan Africa where traditional U.S. interests have not been focused.⁹⁸ A GWOT mindset towards Africa will tarnish the U.S. image and an emphasis on assisting Africa leaders to build, "African solutions to African problems," is required.⁹⁹ Additionally, U.S. informational power must address the population en masse for they are the mechanism of change. The U.S. must present a consistent message from primarily non-military sources and support it with actions.

Though the military is ill-suited to lead collective endeavors, it is a valuable supporting effort. In its mindset to eradicate terrorism, AFRICOM must adopt the David Kilcullen concept of "Disaggregation."¹⁰⁰ It must avoid grouping local and regional insurgencies into a single entity and must analyze the root motivation of each group and address their individual grievances through non-kinetic means. Thus far, the U.S. has demonstrated that in the grand scheme to eradicate terrorism, short-term actions to eliminate local terrorists are prioritized over long-term strategy. Continuing this mindset under AFRICOM will ultimately carry negative strategic costs in the effort to win the hearts and minds of the Sub-Saharan people. Ultimately, AFRICOM must demonstrate its commitment to a long-term security relationship on African terms and its actions must reinforce its message.¹⁰¹

Reduced to a supporting role, AFRICOM can focus efforts on increasing the capabilities of African militaries to provide security and stability for their own countries and regions. Current undertakings to help train and professionalize local militaries should expand to include the ASF. It should also look to broaden the African contingency operations training and assistance program at the AU and become closely associated with this train the trainer pursuit. Through AFRICOM's Theater Security Cooperation and Security Assistance programs, it should strive to reorient African militaries away from internal regime security towards external defense. Along the way, it should bring a sense of military professionalism and western notions of civil-military relations to help partner African states.¹⁰² In all non-contingency situations, the U.S. military must be a supporting or follow-on effort, falling in trace of the civilian interagency team.

Conclusion

The key to U.S. success in countering China's Sub-Saharan Africa influence is to strengthen partnerships with African nations. Though recent Chinese actions such as its change in attitude towards Sudan suggest that its sense of global responsibility is causing more positive actions, the U.S. must maintain its dominance as the leading economic power in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to preserve its strategic interests. Economics alone will not solve African problems but must be the cornerstone of U.S. strategy. The U.S. must also continue to encourage positive behavior by using the international community and together with China, champion an environment that emphasizes human rights and corporate responsibility.¹⁰³

The current AFRICOM structure is ill-suited to meet this requirement. A new lead agency is required to better coordinate application of U.S. strategy and at the same time, remove the military face from its foreign policy. This will free AFRICOM to focus its military activities on building partnerships through non-kinetic engagement and help prepare African forces to address

their own issues on their own terms. In this process, AFRICOM must refrain from invoking a traditional U.S. GWOT mindset that focuses on short-term goals and must adopt a long-term plan.

Ultimately, the U.S. military must play a supporting role in U.S. engagement policy in Sub-Saharan Africa and be overshadowed by the application of other elements of national power. China is successful in Africa and its influence is growing not because of its military presence, but rather a diplomatic outlook towards the region that treats the developing nations as equals and employs a coordinated application of all the elements of power. The U.S. must reemphasize its commitment to Sub-Saharan Africa and design a strategy that guarantees the African population creates African solutions to African problems vice putting an African face on problems the U.S. identifies. If the U.S. is successful in this endeavor, it will achieve both its national security objectives and mitigate the growing Chinese influence.

APPENDIX

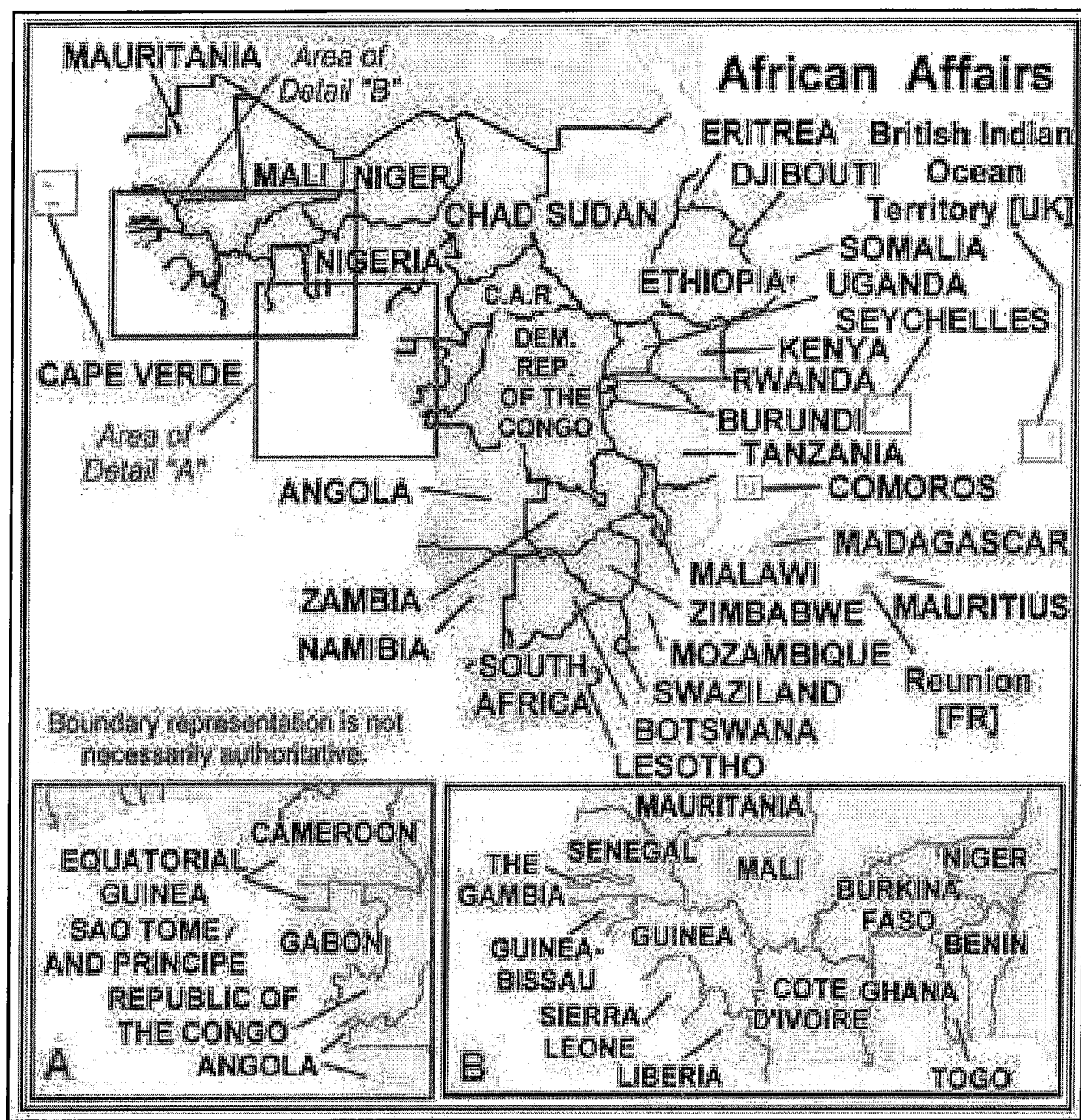


Figure 1 – Map of Sub-Sahara Africa.

Source: United States Department of State Website. <http://www.state.gov/p/af/ci/> (accessed January 16, 2009).

APPENDIX

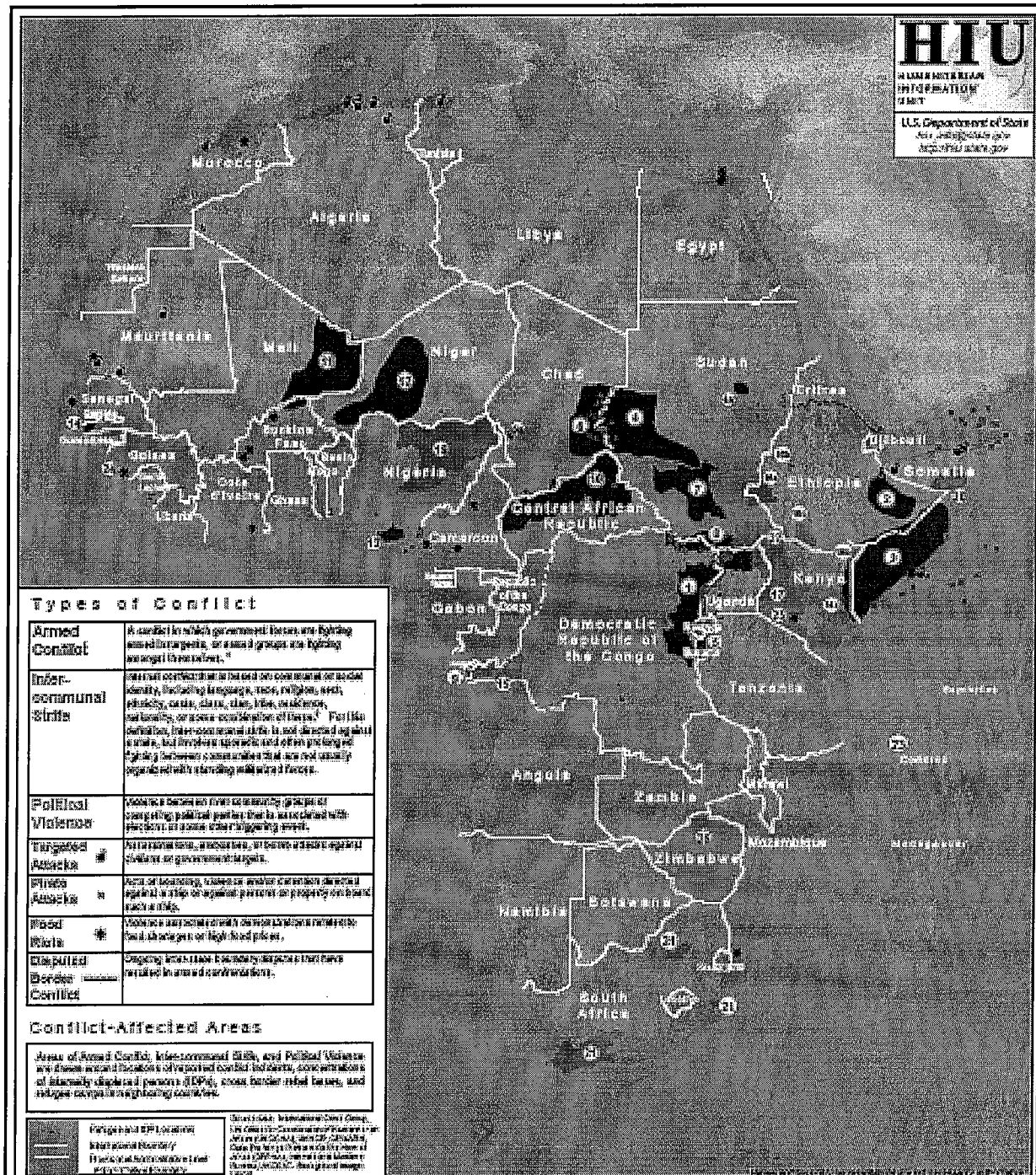


Figure 2 – Sub-national and Transnational Conflict-Affect Area, January 2007-October 2008.
Source: United States Department of State Website.
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/49256ff12.html/> (accessed 4 February 2009).

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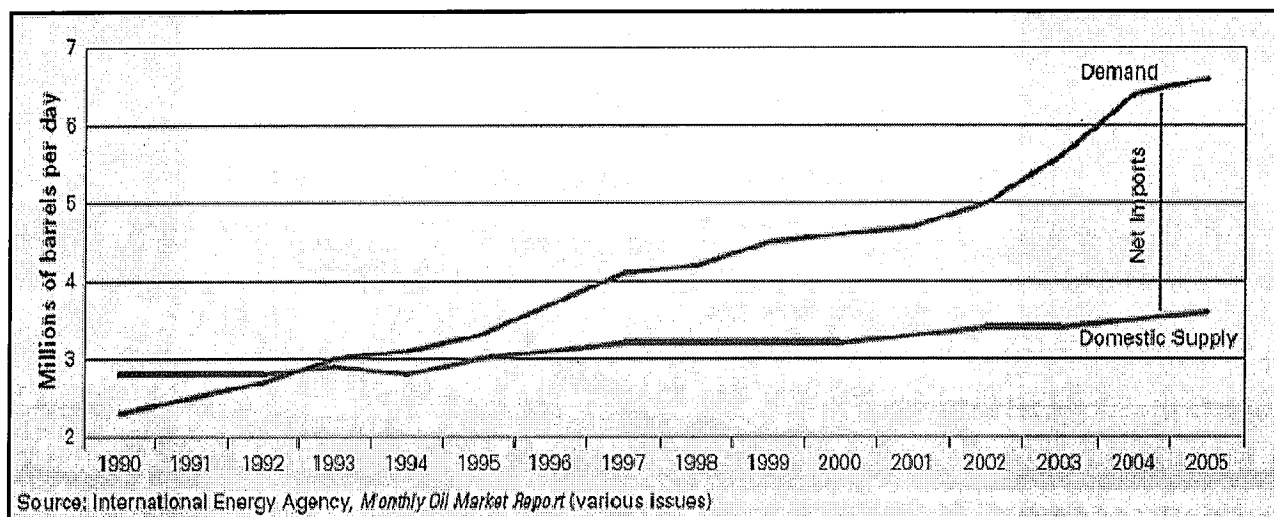


Figure 3 – China's Oil Demand and Domestic Supply, 1990-2005

Source: Erica Downs, *The Brookings Foreign Policy Studies Energy Security Series: China*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, December 2006), 10, <http://www3.brookings.edu/fp/research/energy/2006china.pdf/> (accessed December 23, 2008).

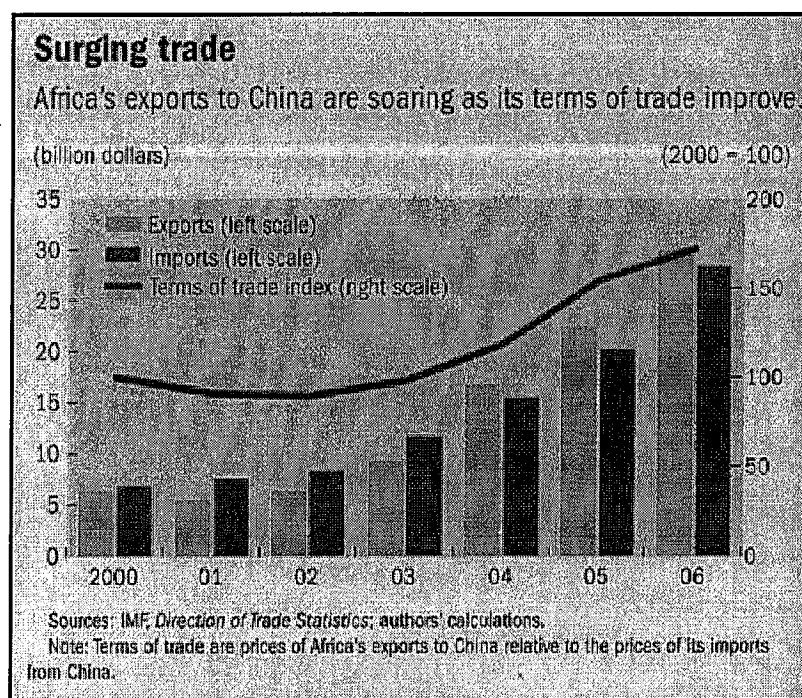


Figure 4 – Surging Chinese Trade with Africa

Source: Jian-Ye Wang, and Abdoulaye Bio-Tchane, "Africa's Burgeoning Ties with China," *Finance and Development* 45, no. 1, March 2008, 44, <http://www.proquest.umi.com/> (accessed August 21, 2008).

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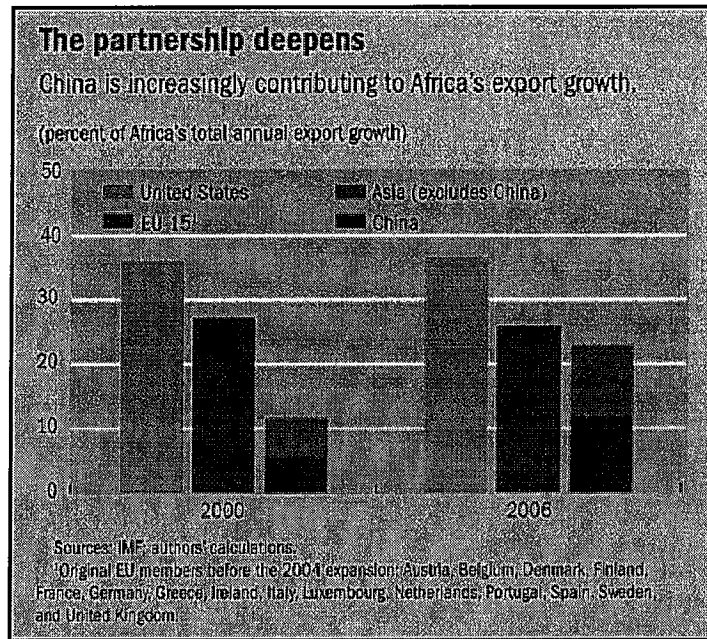


Figure 5 – World Contributors to African Export Growth

Source: Jian-Ye Wang, and Abdoulaye Bio-Tchane, "Africa's Burgeoning Ties with China," *Finance and Development* 45, no. 1, March 2008, 44, <http://www.proquest.umi.com/> (accessed August 21, 2008).

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